



Charging Policy

The wellbeing of our school community is at the heart of all that we do and is linked to our Core Values of Belief, Effort, Community & Kindness. These values help us to better understand and improve the wellbeing of our school community with this policy, and all others, being consistent in promoting those values.

Approved by:	[Name]	Date:	[Date]
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Last reviewed on:	[Date]
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Next review due by:	[Date]
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CHARGING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy was written using the guidance provided by the Fair Access Division of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DfCSF) and complements the information given in 'A Guide to the Law for School Governors' Chapter 23. This guidance accurately reflects the terms of the Education Act, 1996.

The Board of Governors, of St Ethelwold's VA School, cannot charge for:

- an admission application;
- education provided during school hours (including the supply of any materials, books, instruments or other equipment);
- education provided outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for, or part of religious education;
- tuition for pupils learning to play musical instruments if the tuition is required as part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- entry for a prescribed public examination, if the pupil has been prepared for it at the school.

The Board of Governors of St Ethelwold's VA School can charge for:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment, where the child's parent wishes him/her to own them;
- optional extras (see below);
- music and vocal tuition, in limited circumstances (see below).

Optional Extras

Charges may be made for some activities that are known as 'optional extras.' Where an optional extra is being provided, a charge can be made for providing materials, books, instruments, or equipment. Optional extras are:

- education provided outside of school time that is not:

a) part of the National Curriculum;

b) part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school;

c) part of religious education.

- examination entry fee(s) if the registered pupil has not been prepared for the examination(s) at the school;
- transport that is not required to take the pupil to school or to other premises where the local authority/governing body have arranged for the pupil to be provided with education;
- board and lodging for a pupil on a residential visit.

In calculating the cost of optional extras an amount may be included in relation to:

- any materials, books, instruments, or equipment provided in connection with the optional extra;
- non-teaching staff;
- teaching staff engaged under contracts for services purely to provide an optional extra. This includes supply teachers engaged specifically to provide the optional extra;
- the cost, or a proportion of the costs, for teaching staff, employed to provide tuition in playing a musical instrument, where the tuition is an optional extra.

Any charge made in respect of individual pupils must not exceed the actual cost of providing the optional extra activity, divided equally by the number of pupils participating. It must not therefore include an element of subsidy for any other pupils wishing to participate in the activity whose parents are unwilling or unable to pay the full charge.

Furthermore, in case where a small proportion of the activity takes place during school hours the charge cannot include the cost of alternative provision for those pupils who do not wish to participate. Therefore, no charge can be made for supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit. Participation in any optional extra activity will be on the basis of parental choice and a willingness to meet the charges. Parental agreement is therefore a pre-requisite for the provision of an optional extra where charges will be made.

Recovery of Debt

The school does not allow parents and carers to incur debt.

Where a debt has been accrued, the school will make every effort to reclaim money owed through conversations and letters, however if this fails, the school will take action through the Small Claims Court.

Voluntary Contributions

Nothing in legislation prevents St Ethelwold's VA School, or the local authority, asking for voluntary contributions for the benefit of the school, or any school activities. However, if the activity cannot be funded without voluntary contributions, the governing body or Head Teacher will make this clear to parents at the outset. The governing body or Head Teacher will also make it clear to parents that there is no obligation to make any contribution. It is important to note that no child should be excluded from an activity simply because his or her parents are unwilling or unable to pay. If insufficient voluntary contributions are raised to fund a visit, then it must be cancelled. We must make sure that this is made clear to parents. If a parent is unwilling or unable to pay, their child must still

be given an equal chance to go on the visit. We should make it clear to parents at the outset our policy for allocating places on school visits.

When making requests for voluntary contributions to the school funds, parents must not be made to feel pressurised into paying as it is voluntary and not compulsory. We will not send out direct debit or standing order mandates to parents when requesting contributions.

Residential Visits

St Ethelwold's VA School cannot charge for:

- education provided on any visit that takes place during school hours;
- education provided on any visit that takes place outside school hours if it is part of the National Curriculum, or part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school, or part of religious education;
- supply teachers to cover for those teachers who are absent from school accompanying pupils on a residential visit.

St Ethelwold's VA School can charge for:

- board and lodging and the charge must not exceed the actual cost.

When we inform parents about a forthcoming visit, we will make it clear that parents who can prove they are in receipt of the following benefits will be exempt from paying the cost of board and lodging:

- a) Income Support;

- b) Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance;
- c) In receipt of any other benefit or allowance, or entitled to any tax credit under the Tax Credits Act 2002 or element of such a tax credit, as may be prescribed by regulations from time to time for any period wholly or partly comprised in the time spent on the trip. Currently the following are prescribed:
 - ☐ support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999;
 - ☐ Child Tax Credit, providing Working Tax Credit is not also received and the family's income (as assessed by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs) does not exceed £16,190 i.e. children who are eligible to receive free school meals;
 - ☐ Income Related Employment and Support Allowance.
- d) Guarantee element of the State Pension Credit.
- e) Receipt of Universal Credit.

Music Tuition

Although the law states that all education provided during school hours must be free, music lessons are an exception to this rule. The Education and Inspections Act, 2006, introduced a regulation-making power which allowed the DfCSF to specify circumstances where charging can be made for music tuition. The new regulations, which came into force in September, 2007, provide pupils with greater access to vocal and instrumental tuition. Charges may be made for teaching either an individual pupil, or groups of pupils of any appropriate size (provided that the size of the group is based on sound pedagogical principles) to play a musical instrument or to sing. Charges may only be made if the teaching is not an essential part of either the National Curriculum or a public examination syllabus being followed by the pupil(s).

Transport

We cannot charge for:

- transporting registered pupils to or from the school premises, where the local education authority has a statutory obligation to provide transport;
- transporting registered pupils to other premises where the governing body or local education authority has arranged for pupils to be educated;
- transport that enables a pupil to meet an examination requirement when he/she has been prepared for that examination at the school;
- transport provided in connection with an educational visit.

Education Partly during school hours

Where an activity takes place during and partly outside school hours, there is a basis for determining whether it is deemed to take place either inside or outside school hours. However, a charge can only be made for the activity outside school hours if it is not part of the National Curriculum, not part of a syllabus for a prescribed public examination that the pupil is being prepared for at the school and not part of religious education.

Non-Residential Activities

If 50% or more of the time spent on the activity occurs during school hours, it is deemed to take place during school hours. Time spent on travel counts in this calculation if the travel itself occurs during school hours. School hours do not include the break in the middle of the day.

Where less than 50% of the time spent on an activity falls during school hours, it is deemed to have taken place outside school hours. For example, an excursion might require pupils to leave school an hour before the school day ends, but the activity does not end until late in the evening.

Residential Visits

If the number of school sessions taken up by the visit is equal to or greater than 50% of the number of half days spent on the visit, it is deemed to have taken place during school hours (even if some activities take place late in the evening). Whatever the starting and finishing times of the school day, regulations require that the school day is divided into two sessions. A half day means any period of 12 hours ending with noon or midnight on any day.

- Example 1: Pupils are away from 12.00 on Wednesday to 21.00 on Sunday. This counts as 9 half days including 5 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place during school hours.
- Example 2: Pupils are away from school from 12.00 on Thursday until 21.00 on Sunday. This counts as 7 half days, including 3 school sessions, so the visit is deemed to have taken place outside school hours

Summary

1. The Governing Body recognises the valuable contribution that a wide range of additional activities, including clubs, trips and residential experiences can make towards pupils' personal and social education. The Governing Body aims to

- promote and provide such activities both as a part of a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils of the school and as additional optional activities.
2. The Governing Body reserves the right to charge in the following circumstances for activities organised by school:
 - The cost of all activities MAINLY OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS which are optional extras, i.e. Evening trips and weekend visits.
 - The cost of any board and lodging in any residential visit in school time or in any visit that takes place as part of the National Curriculum.
 - The cost of ingredients and material (or require them to be provided) if the parents have indicated in advance that they wish to have the finished product.
 3. Where a pupil's parents receive income support or family credit the Governors will remit the cost of board and lodgings
 4. Activities that take place inside school hours or as part of the National Curriculum will be completed dependent on voluntary contributions and this will be stated to parents. Such contributions will determine whether an activity is viable.
 5. Trips may be cancelled if insufficient support is received. This applies to all activities (both charged and those where voluntary contributions are sought).
 6. THE GOVERNORS WILL REQUEST PARENTS TO PAY FOR THE COST OF REPLACEMENT OR REPAIR OF EQUIPMENT OR OF PREMISES BROKEN OR DAMAGED DELIBERATELY BY PUPILS EITHER DURING OR OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS.
 7. The remission policy for charged activities will operate at the statutory minimum.
 8. The Governors reserve the right to amend this policy from time to time.
 9. The school's hours as referred to in this statement are 8.50 a.m. until 3.15 p.m. on each school day where pupils are required to attend.